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A MODERN
QUESTION
MODESTLY
ANSWER'D.

By MATTHIAS MAURICE.

*To the Law, and to the Testimony; if they speak
not according to this Word, it is because there
is no Light in them. Isa. viii. 20.*



L O N D O N:
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“ me, O ye Children, for blessed are they who
 “ keep my Ways; hear Instruction, and be wise
 “ and refuse it not.

Observe, 1. Who speaks, as before, Wisdom; *Christ* the Wisdom of God, 1 *Cor.* i. 24. 2. The Persons to whom he speaks, simple Ones and Fools; unconverted People. 3. What he commands 'em; to receive Instruction and Knowledge. 4. What Sort of Acquaintance with divine Things our Lord intends; such as values the divine Instructions above Silver and choice Gold; and therefore must intend Faith in the *Messiah*. 5. A plain Demonstration, that Faith is meant, and all that concerns it; for, such keep the Ways of the Lord. 6. The encouraging Motive, they are *blessed* who comply with, and obey the gracious Command.

V. *Prov.* ix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. “ Wisdom
 “ hath builded her House, she hath hewn out
 “ her seven Pillars, she hath killed her Beasts,
 “ she hath mingled her Wine, she hath also furnished her Table, she hath sent forth her
 “ Maidens, she crieth upon the highest Places
 “ of the City, Whoso is simple let him turn in
 “ hither; as for him that wanteth Understanding, she saith to him, Come eat of my
 “ Bread and drink of the Wine, which I have
 “ mingled; forsake the Foolish and live.

Observe, 1. *Christ* having finished his Work; and furnished his Table. 2. The Preachers of the Gospel sent forth. 3. Their making Use of all Advantages, even the highest Places of the City, to publish the Tidings they carry. 4. The Persons to whom their Lord, and they, in Obedience to him, do cry and call the Simple and Foolish; the Unconverted not yet turned in. 5. What they are commanded to do; to *turn in*,
 to

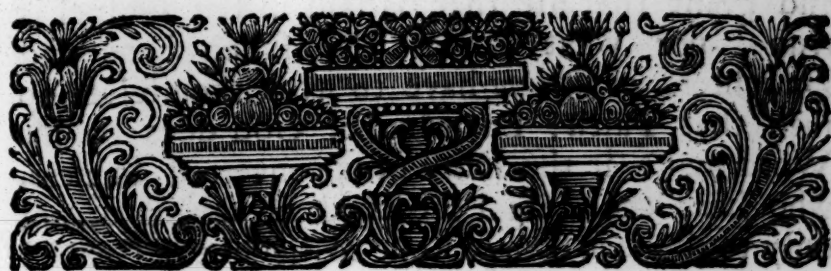
to forsake the Foolish, and come and eat of the Bread of Life, and drink of that Wine, which is Drink indeed; and this cannot be done but in Faith. 6. The Motive; they shall live; *He that eateth me shall live by me*, Joh. vi. 57.

VI. *Ecclef. xii. 1, 13.* "Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth. —
"Fear God and keep his Commandments, for
"this is the whole Duty of Man.

Observe, 1. Who these Words are spoke to; to poor Youths, bent to walk in the Way of their Heart, and the Sight of their Eyes; or to any Man whatever. 2. What they are commanded is to remember their Creator, which, if it does not intend Faith in the *Messiah*, can mean nothing. 3. The whole Duty of every Man is intended; therefore, let not any Man, who hears the Gospel, say it is not his Duty to believe in *Christ*, for God commands it, and 'tis impossible to fear God without it.

VII. *Isa. i. 18.* "Come now let us reason together, saith the Lord; tho' your Sins be as Scarlet they shall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.

Observe, 1. Who the Persons are to whom the Lord speaks here; Unclean, evil Doers, as is evident in the foregoing Verses, *Whose Sins were like Scarlet and Crimson*; and therefore, surely very vile unconverted People. 2. What he commands them to do; *come now let us reason together*; which must intend Faith in the *Messiah*; for there can be no reasoning with God out of him; the carnal Mind being Enmity against God; and our God a consuming Fire. 3. The gracious Encouragement to this, the compleat Pardon of all Iniquity; which also makes it plain, that by rea-
soning



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QUESTION.

*Whether the Eternal GOD does by his Word
make it the Duty of poor unconverted Sinners,
who hear the Gospel preach'd or publish'd, to
believe in Jesus Christ?*

IT must be observ'd that this Question does not consider what Power, or what Inclination unconverted Sinners have to obey any Part of the Law of God; but only what according to that Law is their Duty? Neither is it here ask'd whether it is their Duty to give their Assent to the Report,

and grant that all that is said in the Gospel is true; nor what Power the fallen Sons and Daughters of *Adam* have to work themselves up into that Faith? But whether God does by his Word make it the Duty of unconverted Sinners, who hear the Gospel preached or publish'd, not only to believe *Christ*, but to believe *in Christ*? Any Person surely, who lays aside all Affectation of Singularity, and sincerely and unfeignedly makes the Bible the Rule of his Faith, must say, that God does by his *Word* plainly and plentifully make it the Duty of unconverted Sinners, who hear the Gospel, to believe *in Christ*. This I affirm, and aiming at the Glory of *Christ*, and the Establishment and Comfort of godly, honest Minds, this I shall prove, by producing some of the many, very many Portions of Scripture which bear their Testimony thereunto.

I. *Psal.* ii. 10, 11, 12. "Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings; be instructed, ye Judges of the Earth. Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the Way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little: Blessed are all they that put their Trust in him.

Observe, 1. Who the Persons are the Lord speaks to; the Kings, Rulers and Judges, who are said in *v.* 2, to set themselves, and take Counsel together against the Lord, and against his *Messiah*, so must be thought *unconverted* Persons. 2. What they are exhorted to, and must thereupon be their *Duty* to serve the Lord with Fear, rejoice with Trembling, and kiss the Son; by which Expressions, the Lord himself says, he means trusting *in* him; for trusting in him either includes or leads to the whole of unfeigned Service; becoming Fear (there is forgiveness with thee, that thou

thou mayst be feared) humble holy Joy, (with Fear and great Joy, *Matth.* xxviii. 8.) and the whole of what's intended by kissing the Son; Love, Obedience, and divine Worship. 3. Motives to their mentioned Duty. 1. The Dread of *Christ's* Anger and kindled Wrath. 2. That they *perish* not. 3. The *Blessedness* of those who trust in him.

II. *Psal.* iv. 2, 3, 4, 5. " O ye Sons of Men
 " how long will ye turn my Glory into Shame?
 " How long will ye love Vanity and seek after
 " Leasing? But know that the Lord hath set
 " apart him that is godly for himself, the Lord
 " will hear when I call unto him. Stand in Awe
 " and sin not, commune with your own Heart up-
 " on your Bed, and be still. Offer the Sacri-
 " fices of Righteousness, and put your Trust in
 " the Lord.

Observe, 1. Who the Words are spoken to; they were such as turned what was the *Psalmist's* Glory into Shame, loved Vanity, and fought after Lies; and therefore were unconverted, ungodly People. 2. Their obstinate and wilful Continuance in that unhappy Estate; O ye Sons of Men how long! 3. The happy Estate and Condition of a godly Person, 1. Set apart for the Lord. 2. His Life, a Life of Prayer. 3. Neither he nor his Prayers despised; the Lord will hear. 4. Observe, the several Exhortations or Commands given to the vain and sinful Sons of Men, in this Portion of Scripture, 1. To reform, stand in Awe, and cease from Sin. 2. Consider their Ways, and commune with their own Hearts. 3. Offer to the Lord in a due Manner what he required of 'em. 4. Put their Trust in him. Put your Trust in the Lord; *that is*, in the *Messiah*. Are they not expressly and plainly commanded to

to put their Trust in him? And who in the Fear of God can say, That tho' God did command them, yet it was not their Duty.

III. *Prov.* i. 20, 21, 22, 23. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her Voice in the Streets; she crieth in the chief Place of Concourse, in the Openings of the Gates: In the City she uttereth her Words, saying, How long ye simple Ones, will ye love Simplicity? And the Scorners delight in their Scorning? And Fools hate Knowledge? Turn you at my Reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my Words unto you.

Observe, 1. Who cries and calls; Wisdom, Christ the Wisdom of God. 2. Who does he cry and call to? To the Simple, the Scorners and Fools who hate Knowledge; *that is*, to unconverted Sinners. 3. His special Command to 'em, Turn you at my Reproof, which must include, 1. Submission to his Authority. 2. Conversion to him, and therefore, 3. Faith in him, or else it is no Turn. 4. The Motives to encourage the Duty. 1. They should enjoy the Fellowship of his Spirit. 2. Should have special Acquaintance with his Words, unto both which all Unbelievers are Strangers; therefore unto Faith unfeigned he calls 'em, and lays it before them as their special Duty.

IV. *Prov.* viii. 1, 4, 5, 10, 32, 33. "Doth not Wisdom cry? and Understanding put forth her Voice? Unto you, O Men I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Men. O ye Simple, understand Wisdom, and ye Fools be ye of an understanding Heart; receive my Instruction, and not Silver and Knowledge rather than choice Gold. Now, therefore, hearken unto
" me,

soning with God, Faith is intended in *Christ*; which, in Obedience to God's Command, was their immediate Duty. *Come now.*

VIII. *Isa.* xxvii. 5. " Or let him take hold of
" my Strength, that he may make Peace with
" me, and he shall make Peace with me.

Observe, 1. The eternal God offended, Sin he abhors. 2. Poor wretched Sinners themselves cannot make their own Peace; they would be before God, as Thorns and Briars before a consuming Fire. 3. God has found out a Peace-Maker, a mighty one upon whom Help is laid, the Son of Man made strong for himself, called not only the Wisdom but the *Power* of God, and here called his Strength, and of whom we should now say in New Testament Language, having made Peace by the Blood of his Cross. 4. The special Command of God to a poor Sinner, in an unconverted State, not yet enjoying the Peace of God; let him take hold of my Strength; *that is*, let him believe in my Son. To take hold of God's Strength, can mean nothing short of Faith in the *Messiah*, and here it is commanded; and therefore the Sinners Duty.

IX. " Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye
" the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come
" ye buy and eat, yea, come buy Wine and
" Milk without Money, and without Price:
" Wherefore do ye spend Money for that which
" is not Bread? And your Labour for that which
" satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me,
" and eat ye that which is good, and let your
" Soul delight itself in Fatness. *Isa.* lv. 1, 2.

Observe, 1. The Lord speaking here in the most tender, compassionate Manner to *every one* that thirsteth. 2. That this *Thirst* is not that of an evangelical spiritual Kind, which increases in Proportion

tion to our Communion with the Lord, but a Thirst to be removed by Faith: *He that believeth on me shall never thirst*, Joh. vi. 35. *Whosoever drinketh of the Water which I shall give him, shall never thirst.*

3. But restless they are supposed to be; and therefore spend their Money for that which is not Bread, and their Labour for that which satisfieth not. 4. They are called and commanded to come to the Waters, to come and eat, to come and take Wine and Milk; which must be by believing; for there is no other Way of feeding upon spiritual Food; nor can hearkening diligently unto the Lord mean any Thing less than Faith. 5. The gracious Encouragements to be found in the Duty required, 1. All is free, without Money and without Price. 2. So good and plentiful that they shall delight themselves in Fatness.

X. *Isa. lv. 3.* “ Incline your Ear and come
“ unto me; hear, and your Soul shall live, and
“ I will make an everlasting Covenant with you,
“ even the sure Mercies of *David*.

Observe, 1. Who the Persons are, who are thus commanded; those who according to the foregoing Verse, laboured for that which satisfieth not. 2. What they are commanded to do; for they are supposed to be present within Hearing; 1. To incline their Ear; give due Attention. 2. Come unto him, the Lord who speaks to 'em; and by both Expressions we must understand Faith unfeigned; for, 1. Hear and your Soul shall live, a Blessing inseparable from Faith. 2. I will make an everlasting Covenant with you; or, as the *Hebrew* hath it, I will put to you an everlasting Covenant; *that is*, fulfil it upon you, and shew it unto you, *Psal. xxv. 11.* which Faith alone lays hold of; 3. Observe the encouraging Contents
of

of the Covenant, which must make the Duty of Faith required very pleasant. 1. Mercies. 2. Very sure.

XI. *Isa.* lv. 7. " Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly Pardon.

Observe, 1. The Persons the Lord speaks to ; the Wicked, and Unrighteous. 2. What the Lord commands ; to forsake their sinful Ways, and be converted to the Lord ; which must intend Faith in the *Messiah*. 3. Gracious Encouragements to the Duty ; the Lord will have Mercy ; and will abundantly Pardon.

XII. " Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth, for I am God, and there is none else. *Isa.* xlv. 22.

Observe, 1. God's Command to all the Ends of the Earth ; look unto me ; the same with looking unto *Jesus*, *Heb.* xii. 1. Or seeing the Son and believing on him. *John* vi. A very plain Command to believe in the *Messiah* : Nor can any poor Sinner that hears it, justly say that he is not intended in it. 2. The indisputable Power of *Christ* to command Faith, he is God. 3. The trust of poor Sinners encouraged from the same Consideration.

XIII. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11. " Say unto them, as I live saith the Lord, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked ; but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live : Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways, for why will you die, oh ! House of *Israel*.

Observe, 1. With what Solemnity God delivers this, as I live saith the Lord. 2. The Mercies and Compassions of the Lord towards

poor wicked Sinners, and the Pleasure he takes in their Conversion. 3. Tho' this does not suppose that they have *Power* to turn themselves, yet it is a plain Command that makes it their *Duty* to turn to God; and if their Duty to turn to God, it must include *Faith* in the *Messiah*; for, without that, there never was, there never can be a *true Turn*.

XIV. *Micah*. vi. 8. " He hath shewed thee, " O Man! what is good; and what doth the " Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to " love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Observe, 1. The Man here reprov'd; one who in unbelief was considering whether he should not give his First-born for his Transgression, and the Fruit of his Body for the Sin of his Soul. 2. The Reproof given him; he should have known better Things; the Spirit of *Christ*, in the Prophets did signify before-hand the Sufferings of *Christ*, and the Glory that should follow; and all the Sacrifices pointed to *Christ*; therefore it was always the Man's Duty to trust in the *Messiah* alone for Acceptance before God. 3. The special Account given him, of the Duties God required of him. 1. To do justly; give to God the Things that are God's, and to Governors what's due to them, and to all Mankind besides, in Word and Deed. 2. To love Mercy: Love God's Mercy, to himself; and to all others his poor Fellow-sinners; and not only shew Mercy in some particular Instances, which a *Churl* may do, but *love* to shew Mercy to all or any in Distress. 3. To walk humbly with God; to throw off the Pride of inventing Ways of Acceptance which God has not reveal'd, to cast off all Confidence in any Performances, to chuse God as his God, and humble himself with him. These Things God requires of an unconverted

verted Man, who hears the Gospel, and Faith must be intended in every one of 'em, God then requires Faith, and makes it the Duty of unconverted Persons who hear his Word.

XV. *Matth.* iii. 2, 3, 8. " Repent ye, for
" the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; for this
" is he that was spoken of by the Prophet *Esaïas*,
" saying, the Voice of one crying in the Wilder-
" nefs, prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make
" his Paths straight; bring forth therefore Fruits
" meet for Repentance.

Observe, 1. To whom *John* spoke these Things; to poor unconverted Sinners, and even to the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, that Generation of Vipers, as he calls 'em. 2. What he does in the Name of the Lord command 'em; to repent unfeignedly, and bring forth agreeable Fruits thereto. 3. As true Repentance always is a concomitant of Faith, and in a Sense, may be said, to flow from it, so he commands 'em to believe in *Christ*, prepare his Way, and make his Paths straight. So the Apostle *Paul* explains *John's* preaching, *Acts.* xix. 4. " *John* verily
" baptiz'd with the Baptism of Repentance, say-
" ing unto the People, that they should believe
" on him which should come after him, that is on
" *Christ Jesus*." 4. He does not say only that they should believe *Christ*, or just believe the Doctrine to be true, but that it was their Duty to believe on *Christ*.

XVI. *Matth.* xi. 28, 29, 30. " Come unto
" me all ye that Labour and are heavy laden,
" and I will give you Rest, take my Yoke upon
" you, and learn of me, for I am meek and
" lowly in Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto
" your Souls. For my Yoke is easy, and my
" Burden is light.

Observe,

Observe, 1. Who our Lord here speaks to; all that labour'd, and were heavy laden, and restless, and had not yet taken the Yoke of *Christ* upon them, nor learnt of him. Whatever Duties they seem'd to perform, they were not their Delight: They were unconverted People. 2. What he commands them to do, come to him; take his Yoke upon them, and learn of him, and become meek and lowly in Heart in Conformity to him. Nothing but the most blinded resolute Prejudice dare say that our Lord did not here command them to believe in him. Can any Body be conform'd to *Christ* in Meekness and Lowliness of Heart without Faith? Can any Body learn of *Christ* without Faith? Can any Body indeed take the Yoke of *Christ* upon him without Faith? And besides, 3. The Motives our Lord makes Use of to encourage their Duty make it plain. 1. They should find Rest unto their Souls; for we which have believed do enter into Rest. *Heb.* iv. 3. And without true Faith there is no true Rest of Soul. 2. They should find his Yoke easy, and his Burthen light: It is Faith only finds it so; all unbelieving Hearts say what a Weariness is it! Blessed be God, *Christ* commands unconverted Sinners to believe.

XVII. *Matth.* xxii. 2, 3, 4. " The Kingdom
 " of Heaven is like unto a certain King which
 " made a Marriage for his Son; and sent forth
 " his Servants to call them that were bidden to
 " the Wedding; and they would not come.
 " Again he sent forth other Servants, saying, tell
 " them which are bidden: Behold I have pre-
 " par'd my Dinner; my Oxen and my Fatlings
 " are killed, and all Things are ready; come
 " unto the Marriage.

Observe, 1. A solemn Call to obstinate Sinners,
 and

and this Call in the following Part of the Parable enlarg'd, as many as you shall find, bid to the Marriage. 2. An Account of all Things being ready for their highest and best Reception and Entertainment. 3. Their special Duty to come; for the great King by his Servants call'd and commanded them. 4. What he meant and intended by their coming, was in the first Place their putting on the Wedding-Garment, their putting on the Lord *Jesus* by Faith, for he was immediately bound and cast out who had'nt it on. Friend, how camest thou hither? They were commanded to come in Faith, and therefore Faith was their Duty.

XVIII. *Matth.* xxiii. 37. " O *Jerusalem*,
 " *Jerusalem*, thou that killest the Prophets, and
 " stonest them which are sent unto thee, how
 " often would I have gather'd thy Children toge-
 " ther, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens
 " under her Wings, and ye would not !

Observe, 1. The Persons of whom, and in a Sense to whom *Christ* speaks were very wicked. 2. He says that he would often have gather'd *Jerusalem's* Children or Inhabitants; that is, by his *Laws* he commanded them, and by his discover'd Pity and Tenderneſs encourag'd 'em; the *Will* of *Christ* meant here. 3. What this *Will* of *Christ*, so made known call'd them to; they were thereby commanded and encouraged to put their Trust under the Shadow of his Wings; that is to believe in him. 4. Their continued Stubbornneſs and Disobedience; they would not. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life. *John* v. 40. But the very Expressions, ye would not, and ye will not, declare there were Precepts and Commands which they rejected.

XIX. *John* vi. 27, 28, 29. " Labour not for
 " the Meat which perisheth, but for that Meat
 which

“ which endureth unto everlasting Life, which
 “ the Son of Man shall give unto you; for him
 “ hath God the Father sealed. Then said they
 “ unto him, what shall we do, that we might
 “ work the Works of God? *Jesus* answer’d and
 “ said unto them, this is the Work of God, that
 “ ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Observe, 1. That our Lord here speaks unto the People who did follow him for the Sake of the Loaves; they were unconverted People. 2. He calls ’em from excessive Love unto, and Labour for the Things of this Life. 3. He commands ’em to take due Thought of that Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life; and having used the Word *Labour* in the former Case, continues it in this, but by it means Faith in himself. 4. This rendred very plain upon their asking what those Works were which God required of ’em? This is the Work of God, that is the Work which God *commands*, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

XX. *Job*. vii. 37. “ In the last Day, that
 “ great Day of the Feast, *Jesus* stood and cry’d,
 “ saying, If any Man thirst, let him come unto
 “ me and drink. He that believeth on me as
 “ the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall
 “ flow Rivers of living Water.

Observe, 1. Our Lord taking the Advantage of the great Day of the Feast, standing and crying that very many might hear. 2. The Persons he speaks to, any in a weary, thirsty, restless State, spending their Money for that which was not Bread, and labouring for that which satisfied not, the same with them in *Isa*. lv. 2. Persons who had not yet come to him; unto the few who had come to him, he might have spoke in a small private Room. 3. What he commands ’em to do,

do, to come to him and drink. 4. What he means and intends by coming to him; Faith unfeign'd in him; he that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said.

XXI. *Joh. xii. 36.* While ye have Light, believe in the Light, that ye may be the Children of Light.

Observe, 1. That *Christ* speaks to the unbelieving *Jews*. 2. He commands 'em to believe in the Light, that is *in* him; not only are they commanded to believe him, but to believe *in* him, Who dare say, then, it was not their Duty?

XXII. *Joh. xvi. 8, 9.* "And when he is come he will reprove the World of Sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment; of Sin, because they believe not on me.

Observe, 1. One Part of the holy Spirit's Work, he shall reprove the World of Sin, by the Ministry of the Apostles and Servants of *Christ*. 2. What Sin in a special Manner the Spirit of God would reprove the World of, Unbelief, because they believe not on me. 3. That this Reproof was not because they did not believe *Christ* only, but because they did not believe *in Christ*. 4. That therefore the Commands of God made it their Duty to believe *on Christ*, or their not doing so would not have been their Sin.

XXIII. *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.* "Go ye therefore and teach all Nations. — Teaching them to observe all Things, whatsoever I have commanded you. *Mark xvi. 15.* Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature; he that believeth — shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Observe, 1. The Apostle's Commission to go and teach all Nations, *Go into all the World and preach the Gospel to every Creature*. 2. What in a

special Manner they are to teach poor Sinners to observe all Things whatsoever *Christ* commanded them; and it's well known he commanded them to believe. *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*, Joh. xiv. 1. 3. To enforce the *Duty*, they were to tell all, that he that believeth shall be saved, and that he that believeth not shall be damned.

XXIV. *Act. ii. 38.* “ Then *Peter* said unto them, Repent and be baptised every one of you in the Name of *Jesus Christ*, for the Remission of Sins.

Observe, 1. A great Number convinced, but not knowing what to do. 2. *Peter* supposes 'em as yet Strangers to evangelical Repentance; for 3. He calls upon them, yea, he commands every one of them to repent. 4. Lays before them encouraging Motives to enforce the *Duty*. 1. The Remission of Sins. 2. That they should receive the Holy Ghost. 5. He directs them in the *Duty*, telling 'em it must be in the Name of the Lord *Jesus*; so that their *Duty* was Faith in the Name of *Christ*, and Repentance flowing from Faith; or, in the Prophet's Words, a looking to him whom they had pierced, and mourning for him.

XXV. *Act. iii. 19.* “ Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord.

Observe, 1. The Persons *Peter* spoke to; the Unconverted, and, for ought appears, unconcerned *Jews*. 2. The Duties he calls 'em to; Repentance and Conversion: A true Change of Mind towards *Christ*, which must intend Faith in him, and a Change to answer that in Walk and Conversation. 3. A precious Consideration to promote the *Duty*; that their Sins might be blotted

blotted out. 4. That strengthened from the Prospect of a glorious Time ; the Times of Refreshment from the Presence of the Lord.

XXVI. *Act. viii. 22, 23.* “ Repent therefore
“ of this thy Wickedness, and pray God, if per-
“ haps the Thought of thine Heart may be for-
“ given thee ; for I perceive that thou art in the
“ Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Ini-
“ quity.

Observe, 1. The Person spoken to ; a very wicked Man, perceived to be in the Bond of Iniquity, this the Apostle was sure of. 2. Of another Thing the Apostle was very sure, that it was his Duty to repent and pray, and therefore he looked upon it as his Duty to command him. 3. We may observe something the Apostle in his Case was not sure of ; whether God would forgive him ; therefore says, if perhaps. He did not know what God would do ; but he knew what was *Simon Magus's* Duty, and he calls him to it. In Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God, peradventure, will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth. However, the Law of God is very open, and Duty is very plain.

XXVII. *Act. xvi. 31.* “ And they said, be-
“ lieve on the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and thou shalt
“ be saved, and thy House.

Observe, 1. A poor ignorant heathen Man, under great Horror and Consternation of Mind, shaken under terrible Apprehensions of the Greatness of God, who shook the Earth so, and threw the Prison Doors open, thus frightened, asking what he must do to be saved ? 2. *Paul* and *Silas* told him that it was his immediate Duty to believe. 3. He is commanded not only to believe *Christ*, but to believe *on Christ* ; trust him with

his Salvation. 4. The Encouragements, 1. He should be saved, and 2. His House. *This Day is Salvation come to this House, forasmuch as he also is the Son of Abraham, Luk. xix. 9.* God speaks very favourably of, and deals very mercifully with the Families of his Servants.

XXVIII. *Act. xvii. 30.* “ And the Times of
“ this Ignorance God winked at; but now com-
“ mandeth all Men every where to repent.

Observe, 1. God in a sovereign Way, for a Season, leaving the Heathen to Idolatry, and even the *Athenians* to superstitious Ignorance. 2. God now sending his Doctrine among 'em. 3. Wherever this Doctrine came, God in it commanded all Men, every where to repent. 4. The Repentance intended, is Repentance towards God, flowing from Faith in *Christ*; therefore the Apostle immediately mentions the Glory of the risen Redeemer, of which Glory, Assurance is given to all Men. Faith and Repentance always went together. *Act. xx. 21.*

XXIX. *Matth. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.* “ *Jesus*
“ said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy
“ God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy
“ Soul, and with all thy Mind: This is the first
“ and great Commandment; and the second is
“ like unto it, thou shalt love thy Neighbour as
“ thyself; on these two Commandments hang all
“ the Law and the Prophets.

Observe, 1. God commanding perfect Love.
2. In his Law we learn not what we are able to do, but what we ought to do. 3. *Jesus Christ* is the Lord *Jehovah*, and therefore Love to him with all our Heart and Soul is his Due. 4. Without Faith in him it is impossible to love him. 5. As the Command to love *Christ* must oblige us to the Use of all the Means absolutely necessary thereto,
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so it must oblige us to *Faith*; without which 'tis impossible to please God. 6. The Commandment obliging me to love my Neighbour as myself, obliges me to love myself; and therefore to believe in *Christ*, *He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own Soul*. Prov. viii. 36. — See Chauncy's *Doctrine, according to Godliness*. Page 275.

XXX. Rev. xiv. 6, 7. “ And I saw another
“ Angel fly in the Midst of Heaven, having the
“ everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that
“ dwell upon the Earth, and to every Nation,
“ and Kindred, and Tongue and People, saying
“ with a loud Voice, Fear God and give Glory
“ to him, for the Hour of his Judgment is come,
“ and worship him that made Heaven and Earth,
“ and the Sea and the Fountains of Waters.

Observe, 1. The Word *Angel* being *collective* as elsewhere, thereby we must understand the faithful Ministers of the Gospel. 2. The everlasting Gospel is to be preached as God gives Opportunity to all People, be they who they will. 3. The Servants of *Christ* are with great Freedom to testify unto All, the *Duties* required of 'em, 1. To fear God. 2. To give him Glory. 3. To worship him: Neither of these can be done according to the Intent of the everlasting Gospel without *Faith*; and therefore in commanding each of them, God commands *Faith in his Son*.

BEHOLD the Language of the Bible! To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them, *Isa.* viii. 20. I made Use of no Text but what speaks to unconverted People, and commands them either directly or by necessary Consequence to believe in *Christ*, or into *Christ*,
if

if that Word may be required. I must again observe, and I desire the Reader to observe it, that the Lord does very often in his Word command unconverted Sinners to trust in *Christ*, and believe in *Christ*; therefore let no Person think it strange that God's faithful Servants should tell 'em it is their *Duty* to do so.

Objection, 1. " But we are very sure there is
" an Election of Grace; and this Doctrine seems
" to be inconsistent therewith.

Answer. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself did not think so. He said, *Many were called but few chosen*, Matth. xxii. 14. Whoever are called by the written Word must not stand questioning God's Wisdom in this, or his Authority for this, but think it their *Duty* immediately to obey; and when any are satisfied they are among the Chosen, let them admire Grace, and in a holy Conversation walk humbly with God; and let others give Diligence to make their Calling, or their answering the Call of God, and then their Election sure, 2 *Pet.* i. 10.

Object. 2. " But Redemption is particular,
" *Christ* did not die for all that hear the Gospel
" preached; therefore, why should it be their
" Duty to believe in him.

Answer. There is no Body who hears the Gospel preached, can justly say, *Christ* did not die for him; it would be a great Sin in any one to say so: And, I think, I may justly conceive that the precious extensive Expressions that relate to *Christ*'s Death, are designed on Purpose to prevent, or answer this Objection, such as, " Who
" gave himself a Ransom for all, to be testified
" in due Time. 1 *Tim.* ii. 6. That he, by the
" Grace of God, should taste Death for every
" Man, *Heb.* ii. 9. And he is the Propitiation
" for

“ for our Sins; and not for ours only, but also
 “ for the Sins of the whole World.” 1 *Joh. ii. 2.*
 This don’t oppose any Scriptural Argument for
 particular Redemption.

Object. 3. “ But seeing all are not saved,
 “ Why are all commanded to believe in *Christ*?

Answer. It is not said that all are com-
 manded to believe in *Christ*; but all who hear the
 Gospel preached are so commanded; and how it
 may be with them in the Event, God only knows.
 “ The secret Things belong unto the Lord our
 “ God; but those Things which are revealed be-
 “ long unto us, and to our Children, for ever,
 “ that we may do all the Words of this Law.”

Deut. xxix. 29.

Object. 4. “ But Man is weak, and has no
 “ Power to obey, therefore why should he be
 “ commanded?

Answer. Tho’ Man has lost his Power, God
 has not lost his Authority; nor is the Law of God
 disannull’d: Besides, tho’ Man has lost his Power,
 he has not quite lost his Reason; therefore to
 deal with him by Precepts, Prohibitions and
 Promises, is the most agreeable Way.

Object. 5. “ If he was commanded only to
 “ perform moral natural Acts, it might seem more
 “ agreeable; but you say he is commanded to
 “ perform spiritual Acts, which are not in his
 “ Power.

Answer. And pray what Power has he to per-
 form moral, natural Acts? The Scripture says he
 is without Strength, *Rom. v. 6.* and *Paul* says
 that he, after Conversion, was not sufficient to
 think any Thing, and therefore not a moral, good
 Thing, 2 *Cor. iii. 5.* But when God inclines the
 Heart, in his Strength, Persons perform the one
 or the other; and seeing it pleases him, why
 should

should not he make Use of Commands to incline the Heart to good Acts of any Kind?

Object. 6. “ But we don’t see, then, that all
“ who are commanded have their Hearts thereby
“ inclined to perform spiritual Acts.

Answer. But do you see that all who are commanded to perform what you call moral, natural Acts, have their Hearts inclined thereby to perform them? If God in the one or the other, publishes and pleads his Authority as a *Law-giver*, and yet does not put forth his Power in gracious Operations on a Sinner’s Heart, who can blame him for it?

Object. 7. “ But unto all moral Obedience
“ it is granted the Children of Men are called,
“ especially those who have the written Law, the
“ Commandment makes it their special Duty
“ to obey.

Answer. And wherever the Gospel is preached and heard, Faith in *Christ* is a moral Duty, and Repentance towards God is a moral Duty; there the moral Law requires that Faith. The eternal moral Law of God is every Way perfect. *Christ* has not given a new Law to his Church, distinct from that.

Object. 8. “ It is granted that those who
“ hear the Gospel preached are bound in Duty,
“ tho’ unconverted to believe the Report of it,
“ that is to believe what *Christ* says is true; but
“ not to believe in him; not to believe they have
“ any immediate Concern with him; otherwise
“ then just to believe he says the Truth.

Answer. If I was capable of giving a full Account of all the amazing Mysteries of the Gospel in a doctrinal Way, and then tell the Unbelieving and Unconverted, that it was God’s Will they should believe every Part to be strictly true, some
of

of 'em would be ready to say, that an Impossibility was required of them: But, let the Children of Men say what they will, God does not only require this, but to believe *in* his Son; and *Christ* commands unconverted Sinners to believe *in* him, as has been plentifully proved.

Object. 9. " But, one great Man took a great deal of Pains to prove that it is not an unconverted Man's Duty to believe *in Christ*.

Answer. But *Christ* himself commands unconverted Persons to believe *in* him: And of *Christ*, the Father said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

Object. 10. " But how is it possible to think that *Christ* makes it the Duty of Persons to believe *in* him; and yet it seems, that to many of them he does not design to give Faith? For many who hear the Gospel don't appear to be Believers in him.

Answer. As possible as to think that he makes it the Duty of all to speak without cursing and swearing, and live without lying and cheating their Neighbours, and continue in Chastity, and the Observance of all other moral Commands; and yet it's plain he don't bestow *such* Grace upon the tenth Part of Mankind.

T H A T it is the Duty of unconverted Sinners, who hear the Gospel preached, to believe *in Christ*, is a proved, established Truth; and seeing it is so, it's to be hoped that all the faithful Ministers of *Christ* will in their Labours for their Lord tell the People so. They cannot declare *all the Counsel of God* without declaring of this: The Spirit of *Christ* leads into *all* Truth, this is a Truth, therefore he leads into this. I am far from thinking it their Glory or Duty to stand for a long while together, as they have been re-

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presented

presented, “ Offering Grace, and offering *Christ*,
 “ and offering Life, and calling and inviting,
 “ and come now, why will you not come now, I
 “ offer Grace again, and I offer you *Christ* still,
 “ but this is not to be done always, take him
 “ now, Oh! that I could prevail upon you to
 “ take him, &c.” I never heard such preaching
 in my Life, nor do I think that it becomes any
 Servant of *Christ* to deliver himself in such a
 Manner; Nevertheless, when a Minister has labour’d
 in the Word and Doctrine of *Christ*’s Person,
 Covenant, Love, Grace, and Salvation, it becomes
 him to say with all Freedom according to the
 Scriptures, that God in his Word makes it the
 Duty of poor ruin’d, lost and undone Sinners,
 who hear such Tidings to believe in so great a
 Redeemer; and to encourage them should further
 observe, that him that cometh *Christ* will in no
 wise cast out.

AND all, who make Conscience of walking
 with, and living to God, will not weaken the
 Hands of a Servant of *Christ* in such a Work.
 He does not assume Authority to himself, and
 say, I command you to believe, and I require
 you to repent, but tells the People what is
 written, and what the Lord requires of them.
 There is no doubt but many of *Christ*’s faithful
 Servants have been called poor *Tools*, and their
 Sermons poor *Stuff*: No less a Man than the
 great Cotton of New-England, had a Pound of
Candles sent him by a prating Professor, who
 had been the same Day to see him, and to
 find Fault with some Expressions he had used,
 and to whom the good great Man of God
 had said, *truly Brother I must confess I want
 Light*; but those who make Conscience of
Christ’s Commands will never banter nor distress
 a Ser-

a Servant of his in the Discharge of all or any Part of his Work.

NOR have I observ'd much spiritual Prosperity attending the Persons who have used undue Liberty upon or against any of the Commands of *Christ*; nor have the Places where they have abounded been the better for them. Which makes me think that the godly are at this Day call'd in a special Manner to mourn, that in some Places whimsical *Notions* have been started, and by too many suddenly received, and being received are like enough to be retain'd, the Person's Name and Honour being then engag'd, *which* really draw a Cloud over the eternal Law of God, and the everlasting Gospel. To mention them is no Part of my present Business, only you may imagine that I think *that* to be one, which denies it to be the Duty of a poor unconverted Sinner, who hears the glorious Gospel of the Grace of God preach'd, to believe in *Christ*. I mourn under this; I mourn under the Fruits and Consequences of it where it was first started, and I do hereby call upon my dear Friends and Brethren to mourn with me, and watch against all the Approaches of it.

NO-BODY can tell the Chain of bad Consequences that must follow wherever it enters, unless wonderful Grace prevents. There the Servants of *Christ*, thro' the many hundreds of Years from *Christ's* Time 'till now must be despised, and their Labours, so far as they are known, derided; yea, there the Bible itself, whatever they may profess, cannot be cordially loved and delighted in, because, throughout it is against that beloved Notion; there the unconverted cannot be re-proved, because they believe not in *Christ*; for they are told it is none of their Duty; nor is

their distrustful *Christ* a Sin; and there Faith in *Christ* must be *will-worship*; for who has required it at their Hands; there a poor, weak, doubting Believer can have no Relief: For as he does not know himself that he is a Believer, no more can they, therefore they dare not tell him it is his Duty to believe in *Christ*, and if he takes in their Doctrine, he must think it is not his Duty, 'till first he knows whether he is a Believer or not; and therefore no wonder Persons entangled with that Notion look so indifferent upon the Duty the Lord calls them to, examine yourselves whether you be in the Faith, prove your own selves, and to say no more, there other poor Churches will be trampled upon, and their Ministry derided, and means used to divide and discourage them. I don't say that such disagreeable Things reign wherever the Notion is received, but unto these Things, and others of a like kind it naturally tends, and 'tis owing to restraining Grace that such Concomitants and Consequences don't boldly appear.

ON the other Hand the Savour of the good Knowledge of God is made known by those, who declare the *whole* of his Counsel, in every Place. Giving unto the precious Commands of the Word their due Extent, the Servants of *Christ* can properly apply themselves to any Case. They can tell poor unconverted Sinners that God calls them, and commands them in his Word to believe *Christ*, and believe in *Christ*. Thus the Apostles of old and great Fruit did follow: Upon hearing the Doctrine of *Christ* and that precious Command, what great Numbers, in *Acts* ii. did indeed repent and were added to the Church! And under the same Doctrine and Command to repent and be converted, the Holy Ghost,

Ghost says that *many of them* which heard the Word believed: *Acts* iv. The *Apostles* did not tell the People, "It is your Duty to believe" that every Word we say is true, and 'tis your "Duty to repent in a legal slavish Way; but it" is not your Duty to believe *in Christ*, nor repent evangelically. We say again it is not "your Duty to believe *in Christ*." And I must say, if this was the Truth they might have preach'd it, they should have preach'd it, or they could not have declar'd the *whole* Counsel of God; but if they had done so, where would have been the Thousands? They must have replied, surely, seeing it is not our *Duty*, we will not do it. Let Persons in our Day thus persuaded, deal faithfully with the Multitude, whenever they speak of the Glory of *Christ*, to or among unconverted Sinners, let them 'tell them, "you are" only bound to believe that every Word we say "is true, but it is *not* your Duty, it is no *part* of your Duty to believe *in* this glorious Person of whom we speak? I say, let them fairly pursue the Conceit, and appear above-board, and not deceive the People.

As the Commandment of God, that exceeding broad is in the Wisdom of God a Word in Season unto unconverted Sinners, who fear the Mysteries of God's Salvation in *Christ* open'd, so it will be found unto poor weak Believers under Doubts and Fears. What must the *new* Doctrine say to them? "We don't know what you are; " you don't know what you are yourselves; as " you may belong to those who are to be pitied, " we pity you, but we cannot tell that. We can " tell you *Christ* is a Saviour to some, but we " can't tell you that you have any Concern with " him, only you are bound to believe that what
" we

“ we say is true, but we cannot tell you that it is
 “ your *Duty* to believe in *Christ*. Seeing you
 “ walk in Darknes and have no Light, we dare
 “ not tell you that it is your *Duty* to trust in the
 “ Name of the Lord ; you don’t know that you
 “ are converted, and we don’t know that you
 “ are ; therefore *only* wait in the Way, and just
 “ believe that all that we say is true, though we
 “ don’t say it is your *Duty* to believe you have
 “ any other Concern with it.” Let them speak
 plain and this must be the Language : How agree-
 able to the Gospel let the Godly judge. But
 how pleasant the Way of God’s Commands ! And
 how wonderfully suited to the Relief of poor weak
 Believers under Darknes. What under such
 Circumstances was of great Use to my own Soul,
 I shall here transcribe out of Dr. *Goodwin’s Child*
of Light. Direct. 5.

* Take and put in Practice this fifth Direction,
 “ renew thy Faith and Repentance, set thy
 “ Heart at Work to believe and repent afresh as
 “ if thou hadst never yet begun. Spend not all
 “ the Time in casting out of Anchors, but fall a
 “ pumping ; leave off and cease awhile to reason
 “ about the Goodness of thy former Faith and Re-
 “ pentance and set upon the Work of believing
 “ and repening anew : Say, well, suppose I
 “ have not hitherto been in the State of Grace,
 “ yet I am not incapable of it for Time to come,
 “ I may obtain Grace yet. Suppose my Faith
 “ and Repentance hath not been true hitherto :
 “ I will therefore now begin to endeavour after
 “ such as is true ; and to that End make this Use
 “ of whatsoever Flaws the Devil finds in either,
 “ to direct thee what to mend and rectify for
 “ Time to come ; begin to make up the Breaches
 “ and Unsoundness, which is discover’d, en-
 “ deavour

“ deavour after a Supply of all those Wants he
 “ objects to be in either, mend all the Holes he
 “ picks. Say, Lord, I cast my Soul on all thy
 “ Mercies afresh, I desire now to make my Heart
 “ perfect with thee for Time to come, to part
 “ with every Sin, to submit to every Duty, to curse
 “ every by-end to Hell, and to set up God and
 “ *Christ* as my Mark, Pole-star, and aim in all;
 “ and when thou hast done this, let the Devil
 “ say his worst. This I commend to you as a
 “ special Means to dissolve and put these Temp-
 “ tations about Assurance to an End. I set a
 “ *probatum est* upon it, take it, practise it, it is
 “ a tried one: And it is that which at the last
 “ the Church in Desertion comes to, *Lam. iii.*
 “ 40. Come, let us try our Ways, and turn to
 “ the Lord: That is the last Way and Course she
 “ takes.

You dear Children of God be sober and vi-
 gilant: Your Adversary is diligent, resist him
 stedfastly in the Faith, contend earnestly for the
 Faith once deliver'd to the Saints. That it is no
 Part of a poor unconverted Sinner's Duty, who
 hears the Gospel preach'd, to believe in *Christ*,
 is what was never deliver'd to any by the Spirit
 of God. Tho' some have thoughtlessly and too
 suddenly took up that Notion, yet let them
now in the Presence of God impartially compare
 it with the Scriptures, some Texts whereof I
 briefly produc'd, as Persons willing to submit their
 Souls to the revealed Will of God, and they
 will see that it is a pernicious dangerous Error.
 I don't question but God can and will keep his
 dear converted Children from being carried away in-
 to all the bad Consequences of it; but in itself it is
 a Doctrine of Darkness. Search the Scriptures,
 search the Scriptures earnestly, cry to the God of all
 Grace

Grace for Guidance into all Truth, precious Acquaintance therewith, and Establishment therein, don't readily and suddenly reject what the Churches of *Christ* through all Ages have embrac'd as their Glory. Your Business lies in fervent Prayer, mature Consideration of Scriptures, and humble Consultation with the godly, faithful, and able Servants of *Christ*, and all this continued in, and often repeated; and through the whole and to the last, act as dear Children of God, Followers of the Lamb, earnestly in all Things desiring *Jerusalem's* Peace.

Bind up the Testimony, seal the Law among my Disciples. Isa. viii. 16.

F I N I S.

